WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Cheating consumers through advertisements

†*41. SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the cases of cheating of consumers through attractive but illusive advertisements;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to ban such advertisements;

(c) whether there is any proposal to constitute a National Consumer Protection Regulatory Authority in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, whether Government propose to consider any such suggestion?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) No specific instances of cheating of this kind have come to the notice of the Department of ConsumerAffairs.

(c) There is a proposal to set up a National Consumer Protection Authority.

(d) The Authority will adjudicate on complaints impacting a class of consumers.

(e) The question does not arise in view of (c) above.

Forest clearances on Fast Track

*45. SHRI V HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have put in place a new policy and system to "FAST-TRACK" all the forest clearances;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) how many forest clearances have been given in Southern States in the last two years, State-wise;

(c) out of such forest clearances, how many were cleared under the "FAST-TRACK" forest clearance facility;

(d) whether a system of incentives has been offered to various officials in the Southern region to help to bring all applications under "FAST-TRACK" ambit; and

(e) the details of "FAST-TRACK" forest clearances and their negative impact on forests?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) No Sir. However, in view of the matter of National security involved in the proposals for construction of roads along Indo-China Border, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has requested the State Governments of Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh to complete the examination and processing of such proposals, received from the User Agencies under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, within a period of one month. After receipt of such proposals alongwith the recommendations of the concerned State Government, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (or its Regional Offices, as the case may be) would examine and take a final decision on the proposal within a period of one month. With this system, it is envisaged that a final decision of the Central Government on such proposals would be made available within two months of receipt of the proposal from the User Agency to the concerned State Government/ Forest Department.

(b) During the last two years from 01.11.2004 to 31.10.2006, 210 proposals have been approved by the Central Govemment under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in the Southern States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Out of these 210 proposals, 78 in Andhra Pradesh, 106 in Karnataka and 13 each in Kerala and Tami Nadu have been approved.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.